

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-06 SAM-01 OMB-01 IO-10 EB-07 INRE-00

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1364

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

COMUSFORAZ

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 477

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZOREAN SITUATION: JUNTA TELEGRAM TO GOP

REF: PONTA DELGADA 476

1. ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA REGIONAL INFORMED US THAT ON DECEMBER 20 THE JUNTA SENT A TELEGRAM TO THE GOP, AND A COPY TO THE ABSENT GENERAL MAGALHAES, WHICH SAID:

A. THE JUNTA WAS DISAPPOINTED AND FRUSTRATED WITH NEW DECREE LAW DEFINING THE JUNTA'S POWERS, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE IT TAKES FROM THE JUNTA AUTHORITY OVER COMMERCE, EDUCATION, LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION AND GIVES TOO MUCH POWER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE JUNTA (GENERAL MAGALHAES).

B. THE JUNTA WILL NOT WORK UNDER THE NEW DECREE LAW.

C. IF THE GOP DOES NOT GRANT THE JUNTA THE POWERS IT REQUESTED BY DECEMBER 23, THE JUNTA WILL MAKE PUBLIC THE TEXT OF BOTH ITS REQUEST AND THE GOP'S NEW DECREE LAW.

D. IN THE OPINION OF THE JUNTA, IF THE GOP DOES NOT CHANGE THE DECREE LAW, THE SITUATION IN THE AZORES WILL BECOME CRITICAL.

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2. COMMENT: THE JUNTA MEMBERS ARE ALL DETERMINED TO QUIT IF THE

GOP DOES NOT MEET THEIR DEMANDS. THEY THINK IF THEY BACK DOWN NOW THEIR HOPES FOR AN EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY ARE DOOMED, AND THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE AZOREANS. FROM THE AZORES THE RATIONALE OF THE GOP'S NEW DECREE LAW IS OBSCURE. IT IS THE TYPE OF PROVOCATION THAT THE GOP HAD AVOIDED SINCE JUNE AND IT PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO WANT INDEPENDENCE AT A TIME WHEN CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE HAS SWITCHED TO SUPPORT FOR AN EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY. PERHAPS THE GOP THINKS THE INDEPENDENCE/ AUTONOMY MOVEMENT IS ONLY AN ANTI-COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. IF SO IT HAS MISREAD THE SITUATION. ANTI-COMMUNISM GAVE THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT CONSIDERABLE IMPETUS, BUT THE MOVEMENT HAS DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS, IS BASED ON A DISTRUST OF ANY STRONG GOVERNMENT IN LISBON AND TODAY HAS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT IN THE AZORES.

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